

Beating boredom betters base, warriors

By Capt. Susan Colmenares
8th Mission Support Squadron
Military Personnel Flight commander

Ever seen the movie “Groundhog Day?” Ever thought to yourself that being at Kunsan is like being trapped in that movie? If you’ve never seen the movie but you’ve gone through a week and felt like each day was a replay of the one before it, then you know what I mean.

At the risk of incurring the Wolf’s wrath, there have been times since I’ve been at Kunsan when every day seemed just like the last one. I don’t mean boring; the pace is too fast for boredom. I mean when two weeks or a month have passed by, I look back and it’s all a blur. Time goes by quickly here, but when warriors start to feel like one day is just like every other day there’s a bigger issue to be concerned with - the state of morale. The morale of an individual and the morale of a unit are closely intertwined and critical to the health of both.

The pitfall of existing at Kunsan in a “Groundhog Day” state of mind is that you quickly lose your focus, edge and motivation. You also lose your ability to enjoy life fully and to contribute maximum effort to your unit and co-workers. If you’ve felt that way, or feel that way, I think there are some remedies available.

We have work performance standards at Kunsan that can’t be compromised because of mission, safety and security requirements. So “taking it easy” for a week to recharge your batteries is not always an option. We also have a lot of alcohol available in the area, but drinking away your time at Kunsan is not an optimal solution either. A better solution may be to spend some time getting to know Korea. Whether we’re happy to be here or not, we’re in a foreign country. You owe it to yourself



to see some of it and to meet some of its people ... and not just in America-Town.

Almost everyone eventually makes his or her way to Osan Air Base, and that’s a good start because mentally it offers you a break and visually, a change of scenery. If you’re an Osan regular, and you can’t wait to get to Popeye’s and then to the shopping area, consider breaking up your routine and visiting one of the local off-base Korean restaurants for lunch instead. The Osan AB and Yongsan Army Garrison areas have a lot to see and do (and buy!), but they are just a small part of Korea.

A visit to the Falcon Community Center here reveals opportunities to take numerous weekend trips all over Korea doing a wide assortment of activities: shopping, hiking, visiting temples, the Demilitarized Zone and Cheju-do Island. The city bus can zip you and a wingman to Seoul in about three hours for \$15 a piece. If traveling provides a needed boost of energy, and you have the money to spend, the local travel agency offers package trips outside of Korea to nearby countries like China and Australia.

As you see Korea and/or the world, along with mink blankets and pictures, make it a goal to also pick up a better understanding of each country’s culture, knowledge of its customs and an appreciation for its people.

Travel is a great method to refresh your mind and invigorate your attitude, but it’s not the only alternative to boost your morale. There are plenty of groups and activities that would welcome your time and energy in and around the Kunsan area. When stress is mounting for the upcoming Operational Readiness Inspection, sharing your time with children at a local orphanage may help keep your worrying over inspection preparations in the proper perspective. Getting involved in base organizations, volunteering for unit fundraisers and special projects are great ways to maximize the number of people you know around base, and pick up or hone great leadership skills.

Alternatively, if you prefer to camp out in your room in your off-duty time, camp out with a stack of good books or movies - even if your body can’t leave the peninsula, your mind and imagination can. For those who are feeling the pain of leaving family behind, nothing short of an airplane ticket will change your separation status. But maybe spending time taking photos of Kunsan or Korea and building a photo album to send home will help ease the pain, give you a productive outlet and leave you feeling better than before.

We are assigned to Kunsan for 12 months. For some, that may not be enough time to do all the things they’d like to do. For those who see the days ahead as a big, murky ocean of soju, or hope for a towering inbox to keep them busy, take a moment to reassess and decide whether you can do better. If you can do better for yourself, you’ll be doing better for your unit and the rest of us here.

Countdown to ORI 2001 19 Days

ATSO Tip of the Week: Unexploded Ordnance Reporting Procedures

Either on the way home, or on a base sweep team, everyone should know what to do if they find an unexploded ordnance. The priority of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight’s response is determined by information given and the UXO’s location. Don’t transmit on a handheld radio within 25 meters or 100 meters using base radio stations. Report the following information to your Unit Control Center:

Location – Be specific, for example: 25 feet from the northeast corner of building 1305, next to a defensive fighting position.

Condition – What condition is the UXO? Broken? Buried?

Type – Look on pages 6-1 to 6-3 in the January 2001 Ability to Survive and Operate Guide to determine the type of UXO.

Marking – Mark the UXO with surveyor tape or light sticks no closer than 25 feet around the UXO. Report the marking to the UCC.

Evacuation and cordon – Evacuate all personnel from the area and wait for the EOD team

Casualties, damage and hazards – Report any casualties, damage and hazards in the area.

Commander’s Hotline

The commander’s hotline is your direct line of communication between me and the Wolf Pack. It’s one of several means of helping to resolve concerns and to get my response to comments and questions. As a general rule, I ask you to contact the agency involved first, but if you are not satisfied, call the hotline at 782-5284, e-mail the 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs office or e-mail me directly.



Col. Philip Breedlove,
8th Fighter Wing commander

Who to call	
Base exchange.....	782-4520
Chapel.....	782-4300
Civil engineer squadron customer service.....	782-5318
Commissary manager.....	782-4144
Computer help desk.....	782-2666
Fitness center.....	782-4026
Housing office.....	782-4088
Inspector General.....	782-4850
IDEA office.....	782-4020
Law enforcement desk.....	782-4944
Legal assistance.....	782-4283
Military equal opportunity.....	782-4055
Military pay.....	782-5574
Military personnel flight customer service.....	782-5276
Medical patient advocate.....	782-4014



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